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Clarkes Gap, Virginia
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Request To Retain Morse Code for the Amateur Service vs. 05-235

We have gone far enough to free up the amateur radio service to everyone. You most know by now that everyone is just waiting for the word to pick up their ticket in their next box of Crack-O-Jacks. Whether it was political correctness or budgetary concerns that stated all this 'no-code' stuff is not clear but to strip the last challenging and personal endeavor from the service is certain to evolve the service into a truly 'plug and play' activity. It's only human nature to expect more for less but nothing is free.

We can do better than that. I understand after talking to the League that you are dead set on doing this. But, may I offer another way: retain the code requirement as an endorsement to the Extra Class License. This would be like the old 'Radar Endorsement' in other services. Or, further, treat the code capability as a level beyond Extra; maybe call it the Master Class. In either case, hold the speed requirement to at least 18 WPM; this get everyone over the hump of just memorizing the stuff and demonstrates a real capability.

There's no harm done with this approach. Those who want to can and those who wish not to can still be an Extra.

There's no cost involved here. You already or you should include the costs for the code exam in your license fee schedule. I'm sure it is a nominal charge and folks will support it.

There's some change to your record system but you can tack any charges for development and maintenance in the code text fee. Surely, with the reduction in the number of license classes, there will be minimum impact to your automated data structure.

There are lots of positive things this way. We retain the code. Much has been written about that though you have said that you have not been convinced. I ask you to reconsider many of the wiser supporting comments. I can only offer my thoughts based on forty-plus years on military, amateur and public service radio communications: I want the best to be there. I want to count on them. I want them to know that. Today, too many folks - including some of my Extra Class friends - can't string a dipole antenna - they buy them ready made, can't copy the code because they never really

learned it, can't send code because no one ever asked them to learn it, can't fix a rig and have to send it out, can't hook up anything unless it's plug and play, and most can't even solder. So, you tell me where we are headed. Many of my good amateur radio friends have migrated to the Internet once they quickly tire of all the automated blinking lights in the shack. I challenge you and the rest who want it easier to step back and assess where we are headed. I tell you that 'instant' Extra is not the answer.

Now is not the time to continue down the path of destroying the service. We still have safety belts though all modern cars have air bags. We still have pilots though many modern planes are capable of full automatic control. Well, I'd like to have folks who can. I'd like to think that we all want folks who can. We need folks who can bring up a transmitter in the simplest form. So, when the rig is down, when the computer is down, when the data link fails, when you have to go in bear bones, when all else fails, will that Extra - with the code endorsement - be able to get out.

This request and approach is a simple, cost-effective way to retain this service for our nation, for my state, county, community, and for my family.

Sincerely, Norm Styer - AI2C

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